FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

VOLUME 34 / NUMBER 2 FEBRUARY 1983

Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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THE COVER PHOTO by Amy Stromsten shows a youthful member of the Hare Krishna Movement meditating in his temple

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FORMING A PRAYER GROUP

by REUBEN MUSEY

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER was founded in 1949 by the late Carl Allison Evans "to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental faith is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."

Fellowship in Prayer is reorganizing a program to expand its mission to reach more people and, in so doing, to help them to be more aware of prayer. Over the past three decades, the Fellowship has reached people in every state of the Union and in thirty-some countries overseas. This was possible because people believed in the Fellowship's motto: "For a world united in prayer."

Our new program is being built around the words recorded in I John 1:17: "If we walk in the light, as He is the light, we have fellowship with one another."

The Fellowship will conduct study-hours on prayer and a youth forum on sharing with others.

It is our concern to conduct prayer-and-praise meetings, either on a monthly or quarterly basis, with Bible readings, exchange of prayer, and hymn-sings, perhaps incorporating into the meetings the histories of the hymns sung. Breakfast meetings, men's meetings, women's, will be held. There will be audio-visual sessions, religious films, question-and-answer periods, and discussion groups. Senior Citizens' testimony will also be part of the program. We agree with the words of Leviticus: "Thou shall rise up before a hoary head, and honor the face of the old man." We will also draw on the arts, painting, film, drama, and music. Prayer groups will be based on the following themes: "What is prayer?," "Why do we pray?," "Is prayer answered?," and "Prayer and daily life."

Reuben L. Musey, President Emeritus of Fellowship in Prayer, wrote the above announcement for the Fellowship in Prayer Group he and Advisor Dennis Barry Carroll will be establishing this spring at St Peter's Lutheran Church, Clear Spring, Md. 21722. For information about prayer or meditation groups and how to start one, write to the Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, Suite 250 E, 20 Nassau Street, Princeton, N.J. 08540.

WHAT IS MEDITATION & WHY MEDITATE?

by PAUL WALSH

TODAY, increasing numbers of Americans are turning to meditation. Some have very practical reasons: to reduce the effects of stress and anxiety, to learn how to relax, to become more centered, to improve their physical well-being or their psychological and emotional stability. These are all sound reasons, and many meditators achieve the results they are looking for.

Others, suffering from feelings of emptiness and lack of meaning in their lives, hope to come to know God through meditation — through direct experience to reach a state of conscious union with the ultimate reality and divine dimension of the universe.

Not infrequently, the person who starts meditating for purely practical reasons becomes, as a result of his or her practice, increasingly sensitive to spiritual values, increasingly aware of unity with all of nature as well as with all of humanity. A transformation of consciousness is experienced that radically alters his worldly and material values, and his relationship with himself, with others, and with the universe.

How to Meditate

Meditation techniques vary from the highly complex and esoteric visualizations and techniques of some Buddhist and Yoga schools to Transcendental Meditation's simple technique of sitting quietly in a chair for twenty minutes and reciting a mantra. Dervishes (Sufis) spin in a circle and chant. Yogis may stare fixedly at a candle flame. Tibetan Buddhists visualize mandalas (a circular form, or diagram, employed for the focusing of cosmic and psychic energies). Zen students count their breaths or concentrate on a koan. Christians may focus their attention on a crucifix, or repetitively recite, "Jesus have mercy on me."

All these techniques have in common the objective of tuning out not only the distracting sights and sounds of the external world, but all mental activity as well. They are designed to center the meditator and ready him or her for the descent into the deeper, non-verbal, non-rational, imageless layers of consciousness where true meditation takes place.

The description of how to sit in meditation given by the Japanese Master Dogen in 1227, is still the basic model used by most meditators today: "For *zazen,* a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Cast aside all involvements and cease all affairs. Do not think good or bad. Do not administer pros and cons. Cease all movements of the conscious mind, the gauging of all thoughts and views. Have no desires on becoming a Buddha.

"At the site of your regular sitting, spread out thick matting and place a cushion above it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left palm (facing upwards) on your right palm, thumb-tips touching. Thus sit upright in correct bodily posture, neither inclining to the left nor to the right, neither leaning forward or backward. Be sure your eyes are on a place with your shoulders and your nose in line with your navel. Place your tongue against the front roof of your mouth, with teeth and lips both shut. Your eyes should always remain open, and you should breathe gently through your nose.

"Once you have adjusted your posture, take a deep breath, inhale and exhale, rock your body right and left, and settle into a steady, immobile sitting position."

What one does for the next half hour or so depends on one's practice. Basically, you attempt to sit silently and motionlessly while concentrating your full attention on whatever focus of awareness (your breathing, your mantra, your prayer) you have chosen. When passing thoughts or images capture your attention, you gently but firmly return your attention to the object of meditation. (Advanced students may be able to dispense with such aids to concentration and simply sit — at one with existence itself.)

In Zen meditation, each session of sitting lasts from thirty-five to forty-five minutes, alternating with ten minute periods of *kinhin* (walking medita-

tion). There may be two or more, usually three, such sessions of sitting, in an evening. Beginners are told to count their exhalations, from one to ten, then repeat the count, for the duration of the session. When they lose track of the count because their mind wanders, they go back to one. They progress to simply concentrating on their breathing, and, when ready, are assigned a koan — such as "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" — to concentrate on.

In Yoga, some of the better-known forms of meditation include sitting in one of the lotus positions and repeating a mantra (a sacred sound or phrase such as *Om Mani Padme Hum*) or directing a steady gaze on an external object such as a candle flame, or visualizing a mandala.

Many Sufis use music and dancing to help induce ecstatic states and accelerate the contact of the Sufi's mind with the World Mind, of which he feels himself a part. Others use no extraneous aids to meditation and the experience of mystical transport aside from prayer and breathing techniques. "The science of the Sufis," wrote the Persian Sufi al-Gazali, "aims at detaching the heart from all that is not Allah, and at giving to it as its sole occupation the meditation of the Divine Being."

Meditation and Prayer in the West

In Western countries, particularly in monasteries, meditation as a religious or spiritual practice has been in use for centuries, especially silent, contemplative prayer. Such prayer, as distinguished from the more familiar goal-directed prayer in which we call on God for help or consolation, or offer praise or thanks, is indeed a true form of meditation. The well-known Eastern Orthodox "Prayer of the Heart" (also called "the Jesus Prayer") — the simple repetition on each exhalation of breath, "Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me" — is used to help shut out all external stimuli, empty the mind of all activity, and bring the meditator into union with God. The similarity of this practice to forms of Buddhist or Yogic meditation is clear. Prayer thus used as a way to help lead one to the depth of one's being, where one may encounter God, or one's True Self, is not different from meditation as we have been defining it.

How to Begin

Obviously, there is no one "right" way to meditate. Each person must somehow find the method best suited to his or her background and way of being. But how to find out? Ideally, one would like to sit down with an experienced meditation teacher or teachers, try out different techniques, and, having chosen, receive instruction or guidance on a regular basis. A handful of major cities offers such a possibility, but only a fortunate few get the opportunity to study under a Zen Roshi, a spiritual director, a Yogi, or someone properly trained by an authentic meditation master.

New-Age Bible-Study Groups for Women

by ANN V. O'SHEA

PICTURE a statuesque woman whose intriguing appearance and cultured British accent make her the focus of attention for a group of fashionable women in a country club. Listen as she opens the topic of the day — "Today's Woman As Queen of Hearts" — text drawn from Proverbs 31, which is the instruction of the Queen of Massa to her son who will be king, about kingly behaviour and the kind of woman to look for. The "valiant" woman of Proverbs is seen as the "capable" woman of today developing the new muscled-body image and doing aerobics . . . . Jill Briscow, who is speaking, lives in Milwaukee and works with her husband who is pastor of a 6,000-member church in which a dozen assistant pastors spend ten per cent of their time marriage counseling. Jill's nine books and study-tapes are on a nearby table as non-profit fund-raisers for this and the rest of the church's activities . . . . She is telling now of her plane travels, of bumps and gasps and riding out the fear of flying, People on planes and in airports seek her out and question her. Things open up . . . . "Describe me as an ordinary person with an extraordinary God," she says. Her home and upbringing did not include a religious dimension, but everything else from a Cambridge teaching-degree to proficiency in sports. On her way to a tennis tournament, at the age of fourteen, she was halted by what she calls "a sudden arrest of the spirit" through the idea that there had to be more to life than winning at tennis. Later, at Cambridge, she fell sick and was brought by another hospital patient to an intellectual acceptance of Christianity. "God then touched my heart," she says, "and I made a commitment of my will. I thought that, since He had given His life for me, I could give mine for Him.". . . . When Jill Briscoe speaks to the group of women at the country club, you hear sophisticated concepts of the Pauline persuasion — the old self crucified with Christ, forgiven and born again, the new self, selfless and able to love. . . . In her student years, the Intervarsity Fellowship carried her along. After graduation, she did a coffee-bar ministry in London, where she met her husband. She then speaks of a recent struggle with her six-foot six-inch bearded son who "didn't like church." She tells how, unable to advise a daughter just starting to date, she took her to a youth pastor who, among other things, recommended that she "never lie down, nothing below the neck, don't take anything off.". . . . Back to the Queen of Hearts. Jill Briscoe talks about models and ideals. There are few for anyone today. Being made in the image and likeness of God opens up the freedom to be yourself — just as you are. She says women were brought into the synagogue by Paul. Their questions came so fast that the admonition to "ask your husbands at home" entered the Scriptures in a negative way. Jesus elevated women by having them with him, which was not at all the custom of rabbis and teachers in those times.

PRAYER

by LORI CARLSON

Think of me
I need some word from Heaven
for this worn-out hope of mine
and what looks like
tomorrow drained of all
its dreamy sap. You, yes
you up on the cosmic screen
that only shows
the blue hem of your robe
come closer to your fan, I need
the touch of stardom quick
I need a vision that can help me stand
by love.

"The whole church of God is benefited
when any little girl prays for
a new doll. . . ."

THE WIDENING RIPPLES OF LOVE

by DAVID GUNSTON

IN OUR LANGUAGE the word "love" is such an overworked one, used so thoughtlessly and freely and misused so widely that its true meaning is constantly overshadowed and discredited. We desperately need in English a new word to describe the all-embracing benevolent feeling beyond the attachment between the sexes, and between parent and child, that can more fittingly be used for our warmth toward God and humanity in general. None of the existing terms really suffices. So until such a word arrives and is accepted, we have to make do with the imperfect one. This article is about love in its highest

and broadest sense as well as the love between individuals. Only the semantics lets us down: there are no real frontiers with true feeling.

In my more fanciful moments I like to think of love expressed in a loving action or intention as a (usually) small but attractive pebble tossed with some effort and direction into the wide pool of life. It quickly sinks and disappears from sight, but not before in its own tiny way having raised the overall level of the water by displacing the murk below, and certainly not before starting first a fountain-point of impact, and then an everwidening series of circular ripples whose movement outward is easy to see but hard to detect as actually coming to an end. To carry the developing metaphor even further, if the pebble and its resultant splash are large enough, and if it is really purposefully thrown, some of the ripples may indeed widen into clear rivulets and streams beyond the pool and start to flow into stagnant backwater or ditch, "cleansing, refreshing, renewing with sparkling, sunlit waters where before was mud and stench and death."

A ridiculous piece of symbolism? Not at all. We live by symbols on this earth, and symbols of good intent can often enlarge our understanding, as well as help us to concentate our scattered thoughts. A symbol used in this way is never merely harmless but positively useful.

The point I am trying to make concerns a great truth about love, the supreme power of the universe: that it exists as a potential for good in some measure in every one of us, even the lowliest and most fallible, but that it is within our power, if we so wish, to enlarge not only its hold over us but also its widening circles outward into the world which so sorely needs love, and ever more love.

This is true of everyday life. All loving thoughts inspire a kindly word or deed, or even just a cheery smile, that often in its turn engenders more kindness in the recipient, and so outwards to others. Such an outflowing attitude of heart provides us every day with the starting-point for building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth — if only we really wanted to. This fact is so obvious that the way we are oblivious to or choose to ignore it must surely only confirm to each one of us the imperative need to "burn self out of our lives", and show us what we are missing or failing to achieve by not doing so.

But it is also true — staggeringly true — of our inner life, most especially our prayers. For some people prayers (except at time of dire need) equal good thoughts, while for others they are among the supremely mystical experiences of life. Both kinds — and all prayer experiences in-between the two extremes — stem from love, from the Holy Spirit of love at work in our hearts. Certainly they can all start the outward-flowing ripples of love I have described symbolically. Without love, a prayer is a poor thing, hardly likely to achieve anything. With love, however, small though that love may be at first, great things may be expected. Not least of these is an actual increase of the love we have in our hearts towards the person or persons for whom we pray. We so often fail to remember that God, the source of all love, is present at all times and everywhere. By sincere and trustful prayer his love can be drawn into any situation, being specifically channeled, or made way for, by the unselfish in-

tercessions of loving folk. For God can always work best in an atmosphere of love and trust, but as he largely works through people who try to be in a right relationship with him, it follows that he or she who prays is inextricably bound up with the answer.

This love, so directed, is applied to the object of our praying in proportion to the amount of love this contains, for God can hardly use more than we have to offer. Very often the result is that we can and must answer at least part of our petitions ourselves, by giving loving service to the one prayed for. There are other times when this is not possible or beyond our powers, but God never wastes loving feeling and some of our offering (which should always include self-offering) may well be used in other directions in our everyday life. In other words, although we may be unable physically to help the object of our prayers (perhaps because they are far away or in other hands), some of the love we have expressed toward them is used nearer home. We may become nicer, kinder, more understanding, more forgiving, more helpful to our family and those whom we meet every day.

There is always a third portion of love, for God possibly the most important of all, which he used for the furtherance of his Kingdom on earth, and for the benefit of all suffering humanity. This forms the widest ripple of outflowing, beneficial love. Its use in this way is not easy to comprehend at first, but if one perseveres, the truth emerges in all its wonder and beauty. For example, a mother praying for her son far away and out of immediate touch brings blessing and help to him, but there is another response to her prayer in awareness of sons of other mothers whom her life can touch with the kindness she seeks for her own boy. Similarly, to pray for a bereaved person may well, in a similar sense, help bring comfort to all bereaved persons. In each case, no doubt, the first person prayed for would be pleased and encouraged were he in fact able to see our love for him helping to brighten the world in this way. As Ronald Knox says, in his own striking way: "Remember that it is only a part of even your most private intercessions which is applied to a special intention: the whole church of God is benefited when any little girl prays for a new doll." This may sound nonsensical, but in fact it holds a great truth. And J. Neville Ward adds: "All loving increases the fullness of God's presence in the world, and so brings him nearer to anyone and everyone. It is difficult to explain how a small act of love (a prayer, for example) in one place can make possible or add to greater good far away. All we can say is that we believe that God's work of healing and reconciliation is one because he is one. The power of an act of love is not confined to the occasion that focuses it. It becomes one with God's universal presence of love."

So indeed the ripples flow enrichingly outward from even the smallest pebble of prayer. Lastly, it is a thought worth pondering that such ripples of love will never cease. We can only humbly surmise how far our own lives are purified and uplifted because of other people's prayers, past and present, how much the whole climate of our earthly life is sweetened and cleansed by the unnamed people who down the ages have offered faith and love to those close to them and ultimately to all mankind.

PAUL KLEE: Quotes & Commentaries

by JOHN S.D. GLAUS

"The more fearful a place this world is, the more abstract art becomes, while a happy world produces a realistic-minded art." — Paul Klee

The world of abstraction is a most extraordinary phenomena and is uncoincidentally a manifestation of the 20th-century. It was not the creation of any one individual nor can any claim rights to its formulation, although one might point at a few who may have given the final twist to a stem that had been growing for ages, deep-rooted in the collective unconscious.

"Today we reveal the reality that is behind visible things, thus expressing the belief that the visible world is merely an isolated case in relation to the universe and that there are many more other, latent realities . . ." P.K.

In Paul Klee, *both* visible things and latent realities were present to a remarkable degree. Klee contained and portrayed, both within himself and on his canvases, the myriad consciousnesses of the universe with the profound understanding of the organic nature of art and artistic production. It would be hard to say whether he were more distinguished as an innovator whose expressions were new and shocking, or whether his art form was achieved by a process analogous to natural growth. In either case there is no doubt as to the influence which Klee exerted in being able to express the unconscious and communicate it.

"Out of abstract elements of form, through their unification in concrete entities or in abstract things like numbers or letters, will finally arise a world of form so closely resembling the *creation* that a mere breath will suffice to bring to life the expression of religious feelings and religion itself." P.K.

Paul Klee was born in 1879 at Munchenbuchsee, near Bern, and into a world whose wonderful and radiant sun of civilization was shrouded by the mists of materialism and technocracy. Religions and beliefs which had been so predominant as definite and recognized things were now supplanted. The

FISH MAGIC BY PAUL KLEE

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART: THE LOUISE AND WALTER ARENSBERG COLLECTION

great new age of 20th-century abstraction was preceded by a curious twilight period — a period of gestation and preparation, confused, and only dimly conscious of the end towards which it was moving — the world of abstraction which became the representative expression of our time.

"This conception of nature is an ethical one and not a hedonistic one, and from his relationship the artist should gain an awareness, a new knowledge, and not merely fall back on the standards of the past." P.K.

If Klee was imbued with a philosophy it may be that of a German Romantic which was instilled in him as part of the German cultural tradition. With all the elements of these popular views of the 1880's at his command, Klee sought nonetheless to construct, solidly and patiently, a *creative credo* of his own devising, relying solely upon those facts embodied within the fabric of his own being. Pure facts from his own soul were to assist him in its formulation, untwisted by the politics of any school of thought — contemporary or past. In this attempt Klee succeeded admirably. He was industrious, exact, clear-headed, and possessed a command over his medium that was more than sufficient for his purpose.

"Klee's emotion sprang from a direct approach to objects, to nature. But this close contact with things had its origin in a deep plenitude made up on mature

(continued on page 42)

"Become my devotee and surrender to me and I will release you from birth and death. I will give you liberation" — Bhagavad Gita

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

PHOTO ESSAY BY AMY STROMSTEN

"We have four principles: no gambling, no intoxication, no meat-eating, or illicit sex. If you chant God's name and follow these four principles, you will become perfect in spiritual life."

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

"People do not know what spirit is. They do not know what matter is. They do not know the difference. All these things are explained in the Bahagavad Gita."

"By chanting Hare Krishna one can cleanse the mind of the dust of illusion and uncover one's spiritual identity"

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS

THE BACH FLOWER REMEDIES

by GARNETTE ARLEDGE

A DEVOTED WORLD-WIDE TREK is made by hundreds each year to Oxfordshire, in England, to visit the center and garden of Dr Edward Bach (1886-1936), whose credentials include the amazing alphabet of M.D., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.H.P. (Camb). Dr Bach was the gentle physician/healer who discovered, through the sensitivities of his own mind and body, the subtle, miraculous, poetic herbs, plants, and tree-blossoms called "The Bach Flower Essence Remedies."

One approaches the center through a superbly quiet English village, glorious in the full bloom of July sun. A track — one car or one large cow wide — is overhung with vine, honeysuckle, and wild rose, each used in the Bach repertory. Parking in the lot (space for one small car), one walks through a modest rose arbor into a wild tangle of garden — wild yet purposeful, for here are examples of Dr Bach's flowers, a huge clump of chicory, golden mimulus, heather, the perpipatetic impatiens. A fifty-year-old clematis, planted by Dr Bach, runs riotously over the lintel. There is a water-lily pond to one side in which lurks the illusive water-violet, so shy yet proud and aloof.

Inside the center, the simplicity of the Bach system is reflected in furnishings made by hand by Bach, books on healings and herbs, some beautifully simple drawings of the thirty-eight Bach flowers on the plain white walls. The counseling-room, where Bach saw his patients, is full of his presence, fifty years after his death. His lifework is continued by brother and sister curators John Ramsdell and Nicki Murray.

"This system of healing, which has been divinely revealed unto us," Bach

wrote in *The Twelve Healers,* "shows that it is our fears, our cares, our anxieties, and such like, that open the path to the invasion of illness. Thus, by treating our fears, our cares, our worries, and so on, we not only free ourselves from our illness, but the herbs given unto us by the Grace of the Creator of all, in addition take away our fears and worries, and leave us happier and better in ourselves."

"No science, no knowledge is necessary, apart from the simple methods described herein; and they who will obtain the greatest benefit from this God-sent gift will be those who keep it pure as it is; free from science, free from theories, for everything in Nature is simple."

This is an awesome statement from a man of science who had devoted an entire career and years of remarkably hard work to the study of medicine and research. Dr Bach, coming from a prosperous family of brass-manufacturers in Birmingham, had worked his way through medical school and for many years practiced ordinary medicine in London. His research in bacterial toxicity in the intestines is still cited in medical texts. Even his turning from ordinary medicine to homeopathy — which he did from a heartfelt desire to treat without side-effects or harm — did not complete his search or satisfy his vision of healing.

"One of the exceptions to the materialistic methods in modern science," he wrote in his definitive *Heal Thyself,* "is that of the great Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, who with this realization of the beneficient love of the Creator and of the Divinity which resides within man, by studying the mental attitude of his patients toward life, environment, and their respective diseases, sought to find in the herbs of the field and in the realm of nature, the remedy which would not only heal their bodies but would at the same time uplift their mental outlook. May his science be extended and developed by those true physicians who have the love of humanity at heart."

In turning from materialistic medicine to homeopathy, Dr Bach shone the full light of his energy onto the search for deep-level healing. He worked constantly and full-heartedly. During World War I, rejected for military service, he had charge of a 400-bed hospital at London University College together with his research in bacteriology. According to Nora Weeks, his co-worker and biographer, he gave himself "no rest until he felt so ill that he fainted at the lab bench," eventually suffering a severe hemorrhage and emergency surgery which revealed a cancer. He was given three months to live in 1917. His will to work drove him back to his lab and to health.

"He considered the reason for his recovery, of his return to life, and he came to the conclusion that an absorbing interest, a great love, a definite purpose in life, was the deciding factor in man's happiness on earth. . . . The herbal remedies that he discovered so revitalized the mind and body that the wish to live and do one's work is regained and, with that, the desire for good health returns."

His work attracted attention in England and abroad. Many came to do research with him, though he still maintained a flourishing Harley Street practice as well as a free clinic. His research was varied during this period — the

seven Bach Nosodes, or oral vaccines, the healing properties of electricity and X-rays. He also studied diet, advocating uncooked fruits, nuts, vegetables, and cereals to reduce the amount of toxins in the intestines. A paper he wrote at the time (1928) speaks of "the remedies of the headow and of Nature."

Two years later, he gave up his official labs, clinics, and offices in London and went to the fields. Wales was a natural spot for him to begin. According to Nora Weeks, he was convinced that the true healing agents were to be found among plants and trees. He was seeking a greater understanding of disease itself, its cause and effects on the mind and body. "Then, one evening, dining in a banqueting hall in London, he was given the answer. Not enjoying himself, he was idly watching the people around him, when suddenly he realized that the whole of humanity consisted of a number of very definite groups or types; that every individual in the hall belonged to one or another of these groups." This realization was the key that linked personalities and their manifestations of moods, worries, and fears with the powers of herbs. This lead him directly to his discovery in Wales of the properties of the pale mauve impatiens, the golden-flowered mimulus, the wild clematis.

During his first weeks in Wales, Bach became aware that all his senses were quickening and developing. He found he was able to feel, see, and hear things of which he had not been conscious before. Through his finely-tuned sense of touch he was able to feel the vibrations and powers emitted by plants. If he held a petal or bloom of a plant in the palm of his hand or placed it on his tongue, he would feel in his body the effects of the properties of the flower: some would have a strengthening, vitalizing effect; others would give him pains, vomiting, fevers, rashes, and the like. He said he himself was better equipped than any lab, that no instrument was as accurate as the senses and intuition of his own being. His highly sensitized state was a necessity for the research he was doing, but at times it caused him acute distress. Sudden noises, crowds, airless places would bring him to a state of collapse. His face would blanch, his hands tremble and legs shake, and it would often be hours before he was able to adjust to the lower, coarser vibrations surrounding him. One morning he and Nora Weeks were gathering flowers, when he suddenly said, "I'll be back later when you are feeling more yourself." He was attuned to a disharmony in her which she had not yet noticed.

Nora Weeks relates that for some days before the discovery of each remedy he himself suffered the state of mind for which that particular remedy was required. Not only did he pass through terrible mental agonies, but some states of mind were accompanied by physical maladies in their most severe forms. "For many days, and this during the hottest part of summer, his body was completely covered by a virulent rash which burned and irritated incessantly; and for some weeks his legs were ulcerated, raw from knee to ankle; his hair came out and his sight almost failed," she wrote. "Before finding another remedy, his face was swollen and extremely painful. Severe hemorrhages exhausted him, and the bleeding did not cease until the remedy for the mental state he was passing through was found."

Before a patient arrived for consultation, he would contract the symp-

The home of Dr Bach neighbored that of the novelist Virginia Woolf. It features a comfortable living-room (right) from the windows of which he could see the countryside that produced the flowers from which he filtered his remedies, as well as a typically "English-style" garden (left) of his own creation. The place is maintained by some of his surviving associates and may be visited.

toms of the patient's affliction, and this gave him an understanding of and sympathy for his patients that helped them immediately. In this way he could help people peel away their distresses, somewhat in the way that an onion is peeled, until the pure heart was bared, seen whole, and healed. He changed the remedy as the patient changed and grew. Although Bach could heal with a touch, he persevered in devising a method that could be made available to all. He trained a team of practitioners. Eventually there was interest in his remedies all around the globe.

BY TESTING the dews of flowers on himself Bach discovered his remedies. He learned that the sun's heat was essential to the purpose of extracting the essence from the dews. The dew from plants growing in the shade was not as potent as that of plants in full sunshine. Filling small bottles with the precious drops of dew took an immensely long time, so he decided to pick a few blossoms from a chosen plant and leave it standing in the field in full sunlight in the early mornings. He found the water impregnated with the power of the plant and extremely potent. This was "the sun method" for gathering

AT-A-GLANCE REFERENCE TO THE BACH REMEDIES

1. **Agrimony.** Those who suffer considerable inner torture which they try to dissemble behind a facade of cheerfulness.
2. **Aspen.** Anxiety; fearfulness of 'I don't know what'. Apprehension.
3. **Beech.** Critical and intolerant of others. Arrogant.
4. **Centaury.** Weakness of will; those who let themselves be exploited or imposed upon by others and who can allow themselves to become slaves.
5. **Cerato.** Those who lack confidence in their own judgment, constantly seeking the advice of others, often misguided.
6. **Cherry Plum.** Fear of mental collapse of doing something desperate; uncontrolled temper.
7. **Chestnut Bud.** Refusal to learn by experience; continually repeating the same mistakes.
8. **Chicory.** The over-possessive, who are constantly seeking to put others right and demanding the attention of those close to them. Usually full of self-pity. Martyrs.
9. **Clematis.** The dreamy sort of person who pays little attention to what is going on around him.
10. **Crab Apple.** For those who feel unclean or ashamed of their ailments. Cleanser. Self disgust/condemnation.
11. **Elm.** For temporary feelings of inadequacy; overwhelmed by responsibilities.
12. **Gentian.** Feelings of discouragement and resultant self-doubt.
13. **Gorse.** Despair and hopelessness; utter despondency.
14. **Heather.** People who are obsessed with their own troubles and experiences and constantly relate these to others. Poor listeners. Saps vitality of others.
15. **Holly.** For those who are jealous, envious, revengeful and suspicious. For those who hate.
16. **Honeysuckle.** For those with nostalgia and who constantly dwell in the past. Homesickness.
17. **Hornbeam.** For those who need strength to deal with their daily duties though they usually succeed in fulfilling their task. 'Monday morning' feeling.
18. **Impatiens.** Impatience, irritability.
19. **Larch.** Despondency due to lack of self-confidence; expectation of failure, so fails to make the attempt. Feels inferior.
20. **Mimulus.** Fear of known things. Shyness, timidity.
21. **Mustard.** Deep gloom which descends for no known cause and can lift just as suddenly.
22. **Oak.** Despair but never giving up. Brave and struggles on despite despondency. Plodders.
23. **Olive.** Exhaustion and utter weariness. Tiredness both mental and physical.
24. **Pine.** Feelings of guilt. Self reproachfulness that they should do (or have done) better. Blames self for mistakes of others.
25. **Red Chestnut.** Excessive fear or anxiety for others.
26. **Rock Rose.** Terror, extreme fear or panic.
27. **Rock Water.** For those who martyr themselves in their pursuit of an ideal. Rigid-minded and inflexible. Self denial.
28. **Scleranthus.** Uncertainty and indecision. For those who are one thing one minute and the opposite the next.
29. **Star of Bethlehem.** For all kinds of shock. For the after effects of trauma.
30. **Sweet Chestnut.** The despair of those who feel they have reached the limits of endurance.
31. **Vervain.** Over-enthusiasm, over-effort; straining. Fanatical and highly-strung. Incensed by injustices.
32. **Vine.** Dominating and inflexible. Ruthless and crave power. Leaders.
33. **Walnut.** Gives protection from outside influences and over sensitivity. Link-breaking remedy for transition and change, e.g. puberty, menopause.
34. **Water Violet.** Proud, aloof, superior, reserved. Do not interfere in affairs of others.
35. **White Chestnut.** Persistent unwanted thoughts. Pre-occupation with some worry or episode. Mental arguments.
36. **Wild Oat.** Dissatisfaction with not having found one's goal in life.
37. **Wild Rose.** Resignation, little desire to make an effort. Apathetic.
38. **Willow.** Resentment and bitterness. "Not fair" attitude.

No. 39 is the **'Rescue Remedy'**, a composite of Cherry Plum, Clematis, Impatiens, Rock Rose and Star of Bethlehem. All purpose composite for shocking experiences, terror, emotional upsets, 'stage fright', etc.

©BACH CENTRE, UK, 1980

essences, which is still in use at the center.

Bach was overjoyed with the method he had worked out, for not only were the healing plants identified, but the method entailed no harm to the plants themselves. It was the method of simplicity he had sought — the simplicity of fire, earth, air, and water working together to produce healing remedies. It convinced Bach that true knowledge was to be gained not through man's intellect but through his ability to see and accept the natural, simple truths of life.

As he states in *Heal Thyself*, disease is to be regarded, if rightly interpreted, as a guide to our essential faults. Certain fundamental truths have to be acknowledged to understand the nature of disease. First, that man has a soul which is his real self, of which the body is but a tiny reflection. Secondly, that we are on earth in order to gain all knowledge and experience possible for our greatest growth that leads to perfection. And, thirdly, that our bodies are merely horses for us to ride on our journeys, or instruments with which to do the work of the day. These lead to Bach's fourth great truth, namely, that so long as our souls and personalities are in harmony, all is joy and peace, happiness and health, but that when they are in conflict, disease and unhappiness arise. This belief lead Bach to the conclusion that there is a unity in all things: that the Creator is love and everything is a manifestation of that love.

"The real, primary disease of man are such defects as pride, cruelty, hate, self-love, ignorance, instability, and greed; and each of these will be found adverse to Unity. For the vast majority of us have some way to travel before we can reach a state of perfection, although it is surprising how rapidly any individual can advance if the effort is seriously made, providing he trusts not his poor personality alone but has implicit faith that by the example and the teaching of the great masters of the world he may be enabled to unite himself with his soul, the Divinity within, when all things become possible."

How we can help ourselves was to Bach the all-consuming question. He recommended that we seek within the mind the defects that cause us to work against Unity. He advised honest self-examination through calm thought and meditation and then to flood the defect with an opposite virtue. He advised a short time being set aside regularly every day to keep the mind a blank, or to think calmly about one's work in life. "Be it remembered that, when the fault is found, the remedy lies not in a battle against this and not in a use of willpower and energy to suppress a wrong, but in a steady development of the opposite virtue, thus automatically washing from our natures all trace of the offender," he wrote. He advocated what the Human Potential Movement is rediscovering: meditation, visualization, and affirmation.

WHEN Dr Bach lived in Sotwell, in Oxfordshire, in the 1930's, he was a well-known figure — dressed in comfortable clothes, completely unpretentious. There, shortly before his death at the age of 50, he talked to Nora Weeks about his method: "I want to make it as simple as this: 'I am hungry, I will go and pull a lettuce from my garden for my tea; I am frightened and ill, I will take a dose of mumulus.'"

If a man wishes to be sure of the road
he treads on, he must close his eyes
and walk in the dark

— St John of the Cross

My Cocoon tightens — Colors Tease —
I'm feeling for the Air —
A dim capacity for Wings
Demeans the Dress I wear —

— E. Dickinson

The best slave does not need to be beaten. She beats herself.

— E. Jong

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A WOMAN?

by JOAN CONNER

I FOUND IT more difficult to answer this question than to respond to what it is to be a "human being." I have made several attempts in the last three days, each time coming up against a "wall", feeling frustrated as no one "key" within my life seemed to provide a way to begin to delineate what it is to be a woman (at least for me). Much of my difficulty comes from the frustration of moving from the image of "human being" to "woman." I felt somehow I was being asked to cut off half of myself.

Not that I lacked images of either sex but that the images of "woman" tend to rise up in a confused babble from so many different levels of my being. I think in learning to think theologically and developing this language in the last two years, a number of images of myself which were compartmentalized have "broken loose". I have been in an exciting, often painful, and difficult period of sorting them out. The sheer variety, texture, and depth of these images is confusing in a way that has nothing to do with "identity confusion." It is simply that one has so many "choices" and is so free to make them. At least in midlife one has a certain sense of humor about the process.

To be a woman has come to mean for me to know oneself primarily through what one nurtures or fosters in others. To feel secure in the role of of-

fering up the self — that is, in self-sacrifice, in doing works of "love". To be secure in enduring — abiding with those who are in conflict. And, in so doing, to be affirmed in one's own growth process by the reflected growth of others. This is not living "through others" but more of an abiding with process. This begins, I think, much earlier in one's life when we in partnership with God and our mates give life together. In our pregnancies we first experience being centered in "hope" — in that partnership process.

In this way we come into "tune" or resonance with a force or presence that is much larger than ourselves. We enter into a continuity with history that goes beyond historical process, that is elemental, pre-historical. I do believe it is not true that in childbirth and labor we come closer to the animal level of our existence, but rather that we come into direct contact with the Holy Other which brings us to our knees in awe, pulls us to shreads physically, and w(holy) centers us in a new way. From that point on, we are oriented to the "within", the hidden, the unseen, in ways we never realized possible. Yet one relates to that inner reality in such a way as to make it tangible, "real" to others.

To be a woman is also to "think" with one's whole self — to think in terms of "wholeness" and "wholes". It is to use body, mind, and emotions, even relationships as part of the thinking process — to process information organically — to place process first, not necessarily product. And it is to see a unity of parts.

It is to have a sense of time which encompasses both minute changes in daily life, routine, that is to focus on minute changes in the life process of individuals but at the same time to bear with long periods when nothing takes place outwardly. It is having a quality of patience which is not really "patience" but more like "faith" — an endurance over long periods of tedium. We can wait for twenty years to see what we helped to grow come into its own. Being a woman has to do with living in the "chronos" and the "kairos" at one and the same time. Above all, it is to hold many contradictions in a delicate tension within the self, including rage and self-hate.

Ultimately, the question these views raise for me is one of participation in the life of Christ. If one's whole being is centered in Christ, if one is able to say "I/Not I but Christ" at the core of one's being (at least on one's better days) then where does the issue of male/female focus? Does one through trying to live one's life in the Spirit participate in both images or functions (male/female)? Is one truly "neither male nor female . . . in Christ?"

What it is to be a woman became most sharply focused for me in the context of the pain of overwhelming loss and grief in the death of my oldest and closest friend. To have the other half of oneself torn away over a long and anguished time of suffering and finally death has stripped me of defenses in a way nothing else could. It has pushed out all my edges and driven me into and through the Void in a way that totally violated all my carefully constructed sense of who I was and who she was and what our friendship meant. In the end, we were driven to deepen our commitment to Christ. I have learned about suffering and grace and the real presence in all absences. Perhaps I have even learned to be grateful for these experiences.

EDGAR CAYCE: Prophet for the 80s?

by D. JANI DRUCK

IT'S BEEN over a year now that I have been seriously and *consciously* a seeker. I have always been seeking, but my awareness of what it is I have been going after has developed continually, enabling me to see further and further into what it really is. It was a longing for "meaning" that first set my foot on the path of my quest. That longing then became refined into a search for ways to incorporate my newfound sense of meaning into the daily activities of my life.

The first steps of my journey took me into the strange and alluring world of Eastern mysticism, where I first learned about meditation and the chakras. I loved the music, the chanting, the exoticism, and the food, but a lot of the allure and the power wore off as I tried to incorporate the whole experience into my life as a daily practice. The group energy was no longer there to sustain me; the blue auras, the "fireworks" of mystical experience were left back at the ashram. Without them, my consciousness of spiritual energy quickly faded. I didn't know how to translate that foreign environment in order to bring it back into the all-too-familiar circumstances of my mundane existence.

Though for a long time I didn't practice the form of Hindu meditation I had learned, the spiritual energy that had supposedly been awakened in me was clearly working for me — I can see that now. The way was opened for me to make a few major changes in the most important aspects of my life, and the new circumstances brought me to a moment when I picked up a catalog of conferences given by an organization in Virginia Beach. The subjects of the

conferences and the organization itself appealed to me so instantaneously and so strongly that I determined that I must go to Virginia Beach to take part in a conference. Again, a way was opened up for me, so I was able to go. What I found at that conference, and then at another one a month later, was nothing short of everything I had been looking for.

The central focus of the organization and its conferences are the work of a man named Edgar Cayce. That work forms the basis of a cohesive and comprehensive philosophy of mind, body, and spirit. What I find so appealing and so right for me about the Cayce philosophy is that I don't have to translate it into the terms of the world I am already living in, yet it incorporates all the important elements of both Eastern and Western spirituality. Cayce was a pragmatic member of our twentieth-century world who was able to interweave great and enduring truths with practical suggestions. The language he used sounds a little formal and old-fashioned, but it conveys warmth, caring, and a no-nonsense reasonableness. Cayce encouraged others to live out their spiritual identities in the context of this complex world. He was really the first spokesman for holistic health and new-age consciousness, though he never lived to hear those terms used.

When I identify Edgar Cayce as the source of my new spiritual interest, I usually start out by describing him as a psychic and a spiritual healer. I quickly became aware, when I started doing this, that following the teachings of someone known as a spiritual healer and a psychic is even less respectable to many than following the teachings of an Indian guru. So I always go on, in as detailed a way as possible, to explain how relevant I have found Cayce's teachings to life in the 1980's. Many people who are well known in the holistic health and human potential fields also recognize the value of Edgar Cayce's work, and the conference catalog I mentioned showed an impressive lineup of familiar names. The organization which puts together these conferences is the Association for Research and Enlightenment. I was quite impressed with A.R.E.'s organized, efficient, and elegant facilities, having expected something less sophisticated.

The Life and Work of Edgar Cayce

Edgar Cayce, born in 1877, was a photographer by profession for a number of years, though the work he is known for is his psychic discourses. These discourses were given while he was in an unconscious state. In his trances he could accurately describe the physical and emotional conditions of a body, whether that person was present or not. All he needed was the person's name and location at a specified time, and he seemed to be able to "see" the person and his surroundings inside and out, as if he were there. He would then describe and diagnose conditions of the mind, the body, and the spirit of the person he was in touch with. He used this information to recommend treatments which were needed to bring the person back to a healthy state. His recommendations included osteopathy, chiropractic, hydrotherapy, chemotherapy, massage, and diet.

To Edgar Cayce, as to many of us today, health meant a state of wholeness, a balance of mind, body, and spirit, and he always stressed this in his discourses. He believed that health and wholeness is everyone's natural state and that the body is self-healing: "There are in truth no incurable conditions. For each ailment is the result of the breaking of a law. Healing will of necessity come when there is compliance with other laws which meet the needs. No healing is perfected without some psychic force exerted. . ."

At first, Cayce's discourses served only as a diagnosing tool to help those with illnesses and health problems. But it soon became apparent that he could answer virtually any question, and the focus of his discourses began to expand. Information that began to creep into the individual readings hinted at future world events; described the legendary Atlantis as a superhuman civilization which destroyed itself, leaving behind a legacy of karma for future generations; and insisted that reincarnation is a living reality and not at all incompatible with Christianity.

Over 14,000 discourses were transcribed as they happened, and are now known as "the Edgar Cayce readings." They have been organized and indexed by the Association for Research and Enlightenment, an organization chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1913 to engage in psychical research. The Edgar Cayce Foundation is housed at the A.R.E. in Virginia Beach, and the readings are available to the public there. The readings are in the library, which also has a unique collection of books on para-psychology, philosophy, world religions, holistic health, and personal development. Other services and functions of the A.R.E. include research, therapy, and prayer services; coordination of a worldwide network of small study groups; and a press that publishes books, home-study courses, and a journal, and distributes related books by other publishers. A schedule of week-long conferences is offered each year from May to November. Conference topics cover the broad range of subjects talked about in the readings, from holistic living to reincarnation, from ancient mysteries to prophecies for the new age.

Edgar Cayce's knowledge made possible a philosophy that weaves together such concepts as reincarnation, holistic health, archetypal symbolism, and mythical-sounding beasts with the homespun, evangelical Christianity that his waking consciousness had been nourished on. The integrating idea behind Cayce's philosophy is that, no matter what our karmic influences or our present burdens, our purpose here on earth in this life is to perfect the balance of our minds, bodies, and spirits, so that we eventually become perfect vehicles for the expression of our true divine natures. However, the world is such that we immediately become so caught up in its distractions and necessities that we forget that this life is only a place we are visiting for a purpose; it's not *everything*. Our real lives (that is, our spiritual lives) are spent in much freer and nobler style. Our bodies and minds, though they may weigh us down and entrap us, also provide vehicles through which the soul can do much of its work.

Jesus was, to Cayce, the Master, the perfect example of what all of us can become even if it takes many lifetimes. In order to overcome death, Jesus had

to perfect his body as well as his mind and his spirit. Our ultimate purpose in perfecting ourselves is to help and serve others, and the *way* to perfect ourselves involves putting aside our self-preoccupation in order to help others.

Re-establishing wholeness requires work on all levels. Cayce often said, in many ways, that it is essential, first of all, to have a spiritual ideal. Such an ideal provides a standard against which to measure our thoughts, desires, and actions. A spiritual ideal may be a person whom we want to emulate, such as Jesus or the Buddha; it may be a quality, such as love or unity; or it may be an affirmation or phrase containing wisdom and truth. Keeping our spiritual ideals in mind as much as possible is the best way to make sure we are moving toward, not away from wholeness and health. According to Cayce, everyone has his or her own spiritual ideal, which is really, in a sense, that person's own true identity. Knowledge of one's true spiritual identity is available to everyone through the subconscious; the subconscious is the link between our earthly consciousness and what Cayce calls the superconscious — the infinite potential, the collective spiritual identity we share: in other words, the divine. The subconscious is a dynamic process which can either enhance or distort information coming to us from the superconscious, so we need to be able to sort out the still, quiet voice of the divine within from the impulses, information, desires, and distractions that come at us from all sides. Meditation and working with our dreams are ways of finding that voice; a spiritual ideal helps distinguish that voice from the rest. Working with our ideals, our dreams, and meditation, everyone can be healthy and whole, even psychic, Edgar Cayce insisted.

A.R.E. Conferences

Everything I have just explained can be learned from the many and varied books available on the life, work, and philosophies of Edgar Cayce. Three introductory books I recommend are: *There is a River*, by Thomas Sugrue; *Edgar Cayce — The Sleeping Prophet*, by Jess Stearn; and a brand-new book, *The Edgar Cayce Primer*, by Herbert B. Puryear. Reading about Cayce's teachings is important for anyone interested in pursuing this particular path. However, as I mentioned, Cayce was such a pragmatic teacher that he always stressed the work and the effort required to put ideals and philosophies into practice. The A.R.E. conferences reflect that pragmatism. They feature people who are putting Cayce's principles to work in their lives to help themselves and to serve others. I think it's just as important (and I am sure most A.R.E. staff members would agree) to see other people living out their ideals, and to learn from them techniques and methods. The learning and sharing goes on beyond and outside of the formal structure of lectures and workshops at A.R.E.

The conference I attended in Virginia Beach was called "Using New Age Healing Techniques." The featured speaker for the week was Dr. C. Norman Shealy, founding president of the American Holistic Medical Association. A neurosurgeon, he founded the Shealy Pain and Health Rehabilitation Center,

which uses such methods as self-help through suggestion, healing with imagery, and expanding awareness of the body to help patients with chronic diseases. His six lectures in Virginia Beach provided a framework which covered all aspects of holistic living: nutrition, exercise, stress management, developing human potential, and spiritual healing. He also spoke at a weekend symposium in the Philadelphia area, called "Celebrate Your Wholeness: The Promises of Holistic Healing", which I attended. An energetic and engaging speaker, he outlined the basics of good health, always stressing the importance of one's attitude and of taking care of one's own body. He jabs good-naturedly at those who do not follow or advocate the essential rules of good health. The government and the American Medical Association are frequent recipients of his barbs. The government, he pointed out, subsidizes the tobacco, liquor, and sugar industries, while at the same time publishing statistics which give those three products primary responsibility for three out of the top four causes of death. Dr. Shealy, in all his vigor and vitality, is a living example of the truth of his advice about what is required for good health.

Other speakers at the Virginia Beach conference discussed and taught methods of healing that included using dream resources, healing the mind, restoring balance in the body, acupuncture, acupressure, shiatsu, polarity healing, and the laying on of hands. The Philadelphia symposium covered a lot of the same subjects, such as working with dreams and the art of holistic medicine, but the emphasis there was not so much on technique and methods as on generating psychic and spiritual energy and talking about ways in which to take that energy home and develop it and work with it. Presentations included the story behind *A Course in Miracles,* a book of unusual origin and inspirational content as told by its publisher, Judith Skutch; Dr. Gerald Jampolsky on children as teachers of peace, Stephen Halpern on music and its effects on the body; and Pat Fenske, of the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship, on androgyny as a spiritual attribute. Dr. Gladys McGarey, the current president of the American Holistic Medical Association talked about holistic healing at the A.R.E. clinic, which she and her husband, Dr. William McGarey, founded and co-direct. Mark Thurston, director of Enlightenment Services at A.R.E., emceed the conference and gave workshops on attuning the mind and working with dreams. Dr. Dawn Ahart, director of the Center for Balanced Living and Wellness in Tustin, California, gave workshops on stress reduction and healing touch techniques.

If these two are typical of all their conferences, then A.R.E. is doing a nice job of making the occult practical and teaching ancient truths in the language of the 1980's. By the end of my first conference, I felt that I had been given enough material to think about and to work on for the rest of my life. The topics covered spoke to every major aspect and interest of my life from nutrition to becoming a channel for healing. What I learned about those subjects was enough to open up the path of my search so that what lies ahead of me is much more clearly defined now. As a result, I am developing a sense of direction and purpose, and finding ways in which to manifest my newly-emerging ideals in my daily life.

ON MYSTERY, KNOWLEDGE & REVELATION

by BRAD HILL

NOTHING is more personal than the conception of God in any human mind. Theologies, too, have their individuality, and God is portrayed many ways in the many systems of human thought. But in all religions He is, perhaps most importantly, Creator — the source of all things, before Whom there was nothing. However, "In the beginning. . ." is a problematic setting. To the mind, the most basic aspect of existence is the flow of subsequent result from previous cause. This principle is seemingly invariable. If every moment, fraught with activity, is dependent on the previous moment, where lies beginning, and what is its nature? The inquisitive mind has been persistently perplexed by this primal enigma: Whence existence? This might be called the Fundamental Mystery which can seem to pervade the world around us, questioning its very tenability. From its viewpoint, the entirety of things, beings, and activity seems both to exist and not exist. On one hand, it must, for who can doubt that there is an "I" happening — it is the only certainty we have. On the other hand, there is something doubtful about it, for that which has no beginning has no substance. It is the uncaused beginning that bewilders and awes the mind. The resolution of this mystery, for the time being, lies in our conception of the nature of God. Just as we perceive any one thing as being brought about by some other, separate, thing, so when we speak of the origination of *all* things, avowedly the role of religion, the generative force must likewise be of a separate, transcendent nature. That which began the

universe, the Creator, must necessarily be beyond the eye — the "I" — of the universe. The mind, seeking to worship its source, must cast its thoughts outside itself.

Science is geared toward revealing the entirety of a system, certain of whose parts are perceived in operation. The objective of scientific inquiry is the perception of the whole through its parts, the understanding of which frees us from its power. The twofold goal of knowledge is mastery and deliverance. In contrast, the goal of the worshipper is to be mastered by, and delivered unto, his God. If a worshipper is to cultivate an appropriate relationship with his God, it is he, not God, who must develop a sense of instrumentality. Thus his understanding is of a different order, acknowledging not only the reality but the supremacy, in some sense, of that which cannot be understood. The aspiration to unravel the mystery of existence in order to placate the mind degrades God, since we are masters of what we understand. The worshipful approach to knowledge, then, is to let it be a source of ever-increasing wonder.

Of all the scriptures, none more than the ancient Hymn of Creation in the Rigveda plainly acknowledges the naked mystery of existence. "Non-being then existed not, nor being." The baffling first line of this mystical poem indicates the unassaultable mystery of its subject. It speaks of a state beyond states, a time before time of neither the formed nor the formless, of neither the empty nor the full. It is the voice of the grandest conception of God: The Inconceivable — that which existed before anything existed. A non-descriptive description, it shares the feeling in the first line of the *Tao Teh Ching,* "The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao." As much as we can refer to "the eternal", it can not really be "told of", except to say that it hasn't the parameters which characterize our thoughts and perceptions. Infinity is the elusive notion brought into play as a reconciliation with God's radical "otherness". The Bible opens with the words "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But God is not "told of" in this line from Genesis, His act as Creator is simply pointed to as an appropriate object of worship. Naming a thing does not describe it. From this viewpoint, these representatives of different religious traditions need not appear dissimilar in their accounts of creation; that which is beyond the grasp of the mind remains so, regardless of how the mind reaches for it. The unformed will reside in our thoughts as formed, and might just as well be named, since worship is a mental activity. The Vedic hymn contains a rhetorical challenge concerning the universality of the Creator's mystery: "Who Knows for certain? Who shall declare it? Whence was it born, and whence came this creator?" Toward the end of this magnificent song, the conclusion is a pronouncement of the lofty imperviousness of the Fundamental Mystery, and the juxtaposition of the human and the transcendent: "None knoweth whence creation has arisen".

Contemplating the unknowable nature of our own source, the mystery of God is hardly in itself a panacea. If "none knoweth" God the Creator, what is the point of religion? The mystery of the supreme is a fascination for some, but the supremacy of Mystery is for many no comfort at all. There is bound to be a hollowness in the worship of something thought of as utterly alien; in fact,

such a worship is not the human way. Adoration relies on some relationship. How then can the Trancendent be related to? Vivekanada once wrote, "God is neither knowable nor unknowable, but something infinitely higher than either." Knowing God is like knowing the self, to which one can be neither an acquaintance in the usual sense nor a stranger. This distinctive thread, addressing the hidden, subtly intimate relationship between God and man, is woven through the varied fabric of religious expression. Just as one can variously feel "in touch with" and "out of touch with" oneself, so do various scriptural statements emphasize differently man's proximity and connection to God. There is, though, common ground. Scripture is born through the three-fold revelation of the transcendent, its attributes, and its accessability. The fact of its existence and the nature of its accessability combine to form what is from our viewpoint its primary attribute: God is, in Aldous Huxley's words, "at once transcendent and imminent". Scriptures inspire — and are inspired by — some vision of the co-existence of the mysterious and the known, the inalienable compatability of *that* and *this*.

A certain reconciliation of mystery and certainty is encapsulated in Zoroaster's fervent exclamation: "I do not know what Thou art, O God! but whatever is, that Thou art". Manifestation is the birth onto the field of human perception. Zoroaster's vision of the manifest as infused with the unformed, emphasizing the sustaining, omnipresent nature of God, seems ever to bring the Creator right to the here and now, giving birth to our perceptions every moment as if through the force which "maketh all things new". Similarly, the *Tao Teh Ching* is both mystical and immediate. The unformed Tao takes form as guiding principle, in conformity to which flows the operation of nature. This conception of the Way is summarized by the philosophical descendents of Lao Tzŭ: "The way is the principle by which things are as they are" (Chu Hsi); and conversely, "Nature is the concrete embodiment of the Way" (Shao Yung). Thus in all finity is contained the boundless, in unbroken tranquility there is all action, and the created characterizes the Creator. The *Tao Teh Ching* is a declaration at once offhand and cryptic — the style itself is a sort of agreement between the hidden and the revealed — in which the nature of God is revealed through God in nature.

Lao Tzŭ — if we go by the scant lore that exists about his life — might never have bothered to write the *Tao Teh Ching* if not for the request of the anonymous gate-keeper to whom we owe a debt of gratitude. So it is not surprising that it lacks the exhortative quality of a sermon, and reflects more the character of a worshipper than a preacher. Even so, although Lao Tzŭ's verse is concerned more with reverent observation than with instruction, it does point again and again to the virtue of emulating the perceived qualities of Tao, for this is the way to the "perfect sage". In general, to one degree or another, scriptural emphasis is on knowledge through attainment. Huxley, in surveying the common message of all religions, wrote, "the final end and purpose of all human beings is the unitive knowledge of God's being". In this "unitive knowledge" lies the final resolution of the Fundamental Mystery which escapes normal understanding. God's invitation as delivered in the scriptures

is not only to be close to him through our understanding, but to *be* Him through self-transformation. Even in Christianity, with heavy accent on the schism between God and man, it is impossible to ignore Jesus's striking statement of man's latent divinity: "The Kingdom of Heaven lies within." The commandments of the prophets, the yogas of the ancient sages, the eightfold path of the Buddha, all are so many curricula to be mastered on the path leading to transcendence of the self, to God-realization through attainment.

Of the saints and seers who have lived on earth, Jesus was an astonishing, blazing demonstration of this attainment. The Transcendent was for him Father, and thus his Creator, but his identification with his source was complete, his "unitive knowledge" of the Transcendent undivided by any sense of separateness: "I and the Father are One". This, in one form or another, was all he had to say about himself when questioned; it was the substance of his sense of self. "I am the Father and the Father is in me." Concerning the nature of his own consciousness — the "Kingdom of Heaven" which he had attained — he could only speak in metaphor and parable. Experience is essentially indescribable and it was Jesus's simple admonishment, as it was Buddha's, to be less infatuated with things which hinder the performance of his commandments and the attainment of the freedom they offer. The Tao of Jesus, if you will, is to be found in his commandments, while the way of the Buddha lies along his eightfold path. They share the essential goal: the state of selflessness which is the experience of Nirvana. Buddha had nothing whatever to say about God. The message which through him graced the world dealt only with the nature of our entrapment and how to escape it, suffering and freedom from suffering. Awareness of bondage and longing for freedom were, from his viewpoint, the most worthy states of mind, since they motivate attainment. Buddha and Jesus were like the voices of the voiceless Transcendent, offering deliverance from the finiteness through which all appears as a mystery: "Abide in me, and I in you".

Religion, which in the context of these thoughts is the quest for resolution of the Fundamental Mystery, does not belittle the value of knowledge. To the contrary — religion is a science like any other, and observation, intellect, and intuition are its instruments. Zoroaster preached that "Knowledge is man's highest acquisition". The mind is a tool, to be neither worshipped nor disposed of. "To know that you do not know is best" — this is Lao Tzŭ's attitude toward knowledge, which found an ideal embodiment and spokesman in Socrates. The Greek sage did not renounce his mind, nor would he have thought it commendable. His discourses were marvels of the sharp discrimination between truth and error which, in a different setting, also distinguished the thinking of Swami Vivekananda, and which traditionally in Vedantic philosophy is regarded as indispensable. Socrates did renounce — in himself and others — all pretensions to knowledge. He worshipped truth, not the mind, and was content with mystery, if that was the closest he could honestly get to his ideal. Socrates was executed on the same charge as was Jesus: lack of faith in, and contamination of, the existing religious schema. Each was condemned for his steadfastness, and each followed his set course unhesitantly —

Jesus to return to the Father he knew, Socrates with the eager faith that his death would bring revelation.

Still, it is just this feeling — whether vague or precisely defined — that revelation involves death, which makes religious pursuit unattractive for many, and which can be disagreeable even for the most sincere devotee. The many-faceted theme of death and rebirth is not unfamiliar to even the casual student of Indian religious thought, and Christianity, though not concerned with the specific doctrine of reincarnation, is nonetheless decidedly colored by Jesus's statements that we must die to be reborn in him, that "he who loves his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will gain it". If unitive knowledge requires the death of oneself in order to realize another, albeit greater, self, then this self-realization does require, as Swami Yatiswarananda said, "a certain amount of fearlessness and true heroism". In some form, to one degree or another, religion calls for renunciation.

Formal scriptural revelation, such as that of Saint John in the New Testament and Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, seems sudden, overwhelming, frightening, incomprehensible — generally not the kind of experience for which most people thirst. In John's case, it was an uninvited vision, and although Arjuna begged Krishna for a glimpse of his "Supreme Being," once this was granted he just as quickly implored him to return to his human form. But revelation is not like a malicious being that descends ravenously to consume the mind of one who is troubled and awed by the mystery of existence. For most, revelation is a day-to-day experience. In Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas, the word for revelation is *sruti*, and means "the hearing," it refers to the passing of wisdom from teacher to disciple. All knowledge is revelation, even that which will be eventually discarded in the light of higher revelation, and renunciation is a quiet, often disregarded partner in this process. Opinion renounces opposing opinion; knowledge renounces myth; experience renounces conjecture. No personal conviction is embraced without the benefit of some revelation; no choice is made without the renunciation of an alternative. True renunciation is not abstention, it is the falling away of that which is no longer invested with the substance of one's belief.

Revelation is an uncovering by which what is obscured is made plain. "When one sees Eternity in things that pass away and Infinity in finite things, then one has pure knowledge" — these are the words of Krishna in the *Gita*. Paradox is the juxtaposition of incompatible possibilities; that their harmony is obscured characterizes the nature of every person's predicament. The One in diversity, the Absolute in the relative, the Transcendent in the imminent, the Creator in the created — the quest for harmony and reconciliation is for each of us a private struggle, for we each perceive in the light of our own state of revelation. Worship of mystery leaves one bewildered, worship of the mind can lead to pride. The most satisfying worship encourages hope for continued revelation and eventual union with one's Creator — however He is conceived, and whatever seems to be His relation to the world. There are many forms of worship; nothing is more personal than the conception of God in any human mind.

PAUL KLEE *(continued from page 13)*

human passions and expressed with absolute mastery of the painter's medium, a medium which always formed an integral part of his artistic experience." G.C. Argan

Paul Klee's lesson to the world of art, in the light of his individual conscience, was that the rules of art were missing. Henceforward the Eternal Truth might with perfect reason be expected to issue forth from the wells of man's experience without reference to the conventional appearances of the visible world. Thus there necessarily arose within the creative purpose of the artist three requisites which must be satisfied: soundness of myth, vigor of belief, and intensity of vocation. They were the ingredients which are demanded by the act of creation — nothing else is of any consequence. With his infinite capacity for comprehending these three elements, he found that pictures come into existence without conscious control. The best pictures cannot be willed into existence, they just come into being. Although there are no apparent preconceived visual images, Klee succeeds in representing pictorial designs with a childlike iconography. Once Klee has summoned himself into action, he articulates, orders, and moves pictorial planes through intensive meditation until unconscious creativity evokes a richness from the designs and patterns as can be witnessed in *Fish Magic.*

"Klee is too shrewd to have any illusion about being able to represent the unconscious. . . What he sets out to do is to represent the inconstant but continual pressures. . . of the unconscious on the conscious, on the knowing mind, in the continuous attraction of the known and the unknown." G.C. Argan

Paul Klee's success resides in its deliberate attempt to fathom man's relationship to man and to the phenomena which bind us to the universe. Klee's art was not the suddenly explosive kind but was the inspired efflorescence of the understanding of accumulated knowledge of himself. Because his career was completely dominated by his innate characteristics, it was obvious that he would turn from "natural realism" in pictorial representation and attempt to elucidate the hidden facets of man in all his physical and psychical complexity.

"The artist is a superior craftsman. By the grace of heaven, in rare moments of inspiration beyond the control of the will, his handiwork may blossom unawares into art." P.K.

Paul Klee was possessed of and conditioned by a supreme sense of the factors which constitute contemporary society and culture. His significance transcends the limitations of time and space. His art is a moral commitment and the legacy which we are to retain instructs us to be circumspect in our navigation of the treacherous shoals of the psychic reefs which reside in all of us.

The question remains: was Paul Klee an artist and did he create works of art? Yes, there is no denying it. The Philistines will conjecture and assail with innuendo, but his *creative credo* "Ways of Studying Nature" will remain — forever.

LETTERS

I enjoyed your October issue, especially your ample Letters column, including some complaining readers. All that meditation — and there's still plenty of bile! I find that reassuringly human.

This August I spent some time in Franconia, New Hampshire. Now I notice your October cover: the gray layering and sense of perspective reaching to *something*. Here's a poem about it:

FARSIGHTED NAVIGATION

The man I love best in the world
likes to live in a single room
behind his store as a squirrel lives
behind its stash of nuts and Bruegel's
burghers dance at the wedding feast
behind codpieces stuffed with seeds
and future time.

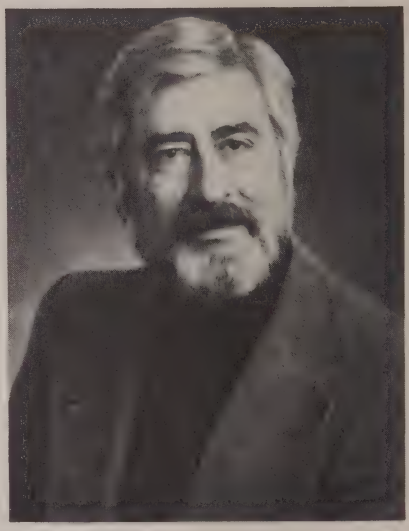
Reading inches of the map
I see it's not a bad idea
to live close to what you tend.
Reaching for the map
my son finds blue roads
thin lines with no medallions
that would indicate the heavy traffic
on an interstate.

We are hoping to ride between one small
New Hampshire village and the next.
The basic trend is west.
I admit out loud we're lost
or turned around and headed
in the opposite direction.
Ah, East, he says. *Towards England*
when we meant to go the other way.

His brother says: *Find China and take us there.*
And the mountains lie in layers all around us
knees and elbows lazing into night.
We could learn perspective from these curves
that hold us, how they lie
not flat exactly, set more blue
less black, more gray
as they move from solid to smoke
as they reach toward weather itself
toward sky, toward dust.

— Elizabeth Socolow (*Princeton, N.J.*)

Paul Solomon



Paul Solomon — writer, philosopher, teacher, and healer — is the founder of the Fellowship of the Inner Light, a spiritual community based in Virginia Beach, Va., with branches throughout the world. The third generation son of a Baptist minister, himself ordained, Solomon founded the fellowship ten years ago, after leaving organized religion during a period of personal turmoil. Often compared with psychic Edgar Cayce, Solomon first attained renown for his trance readings from the "Source" — his name for the place inside himself where he got his information. Recently he has stopped giving readings, preferring to teach people to contact their own sources inside themselves.

Solomon and his staff have traveled to four continents to teach their "Inner Light Consciousness" series of workshops for personal transformation. The workshops' subjects range from the Bible to the art of healing. The fellowship's U.S.-based services include: a thirty-day Synthesis Program to create "a new life pattern and build beliefs and habits that work for you," retreats at the fellowship's Hearthfire Lodge and Carmel-in-the-Valley, and individual counseling with professionals associated with the fellowship.

This interview was conducted during a break from a workshop entitled "If You Would Be Healers," a curious blend of esoterica combining exercises in Tantra, practice in the laying-on of hands, and a demonstration of Traeger, a new form of massage.

FIP: How would you describe the principal direction of your work at present?

SOLOMON: For the moment I am primarily concerned with making contact with people all over the world who are interested in making their lives work better. We're living in a time when people are asking more questions than ever before. Past generations had a tendency to accept whatever authorities told them, but all of a sudden we have an independent generation that is questioning medicine and looking at alternatives, questioning education and criticizing the process, wondering whether it's really working as it should. They also are questioning religion and insisting on finding practical things in spiritual growth that are more than just form. I am excited by that tendency. I think

this generation is going to grow faster and farther than any previous generation in changing consciousness and belief-systems. I am trying to make contact with these people and making suggestions as to how we might go about finding answers.

We are reaching a period where, with our technology and lifestyles, we have affected this planet in a negative way. Natural changes are being accelerated by our treatment of the planet. We need to be much more responsible in our treatment of it. A lot of people say that if we pray enough or meditate enough, we'll avoid the earth changes. But prayer is effective if we are working in harmony with prayer by changing the way we live. We can pray all we want, but if we don't stop burning fossil fuels at the rate we're burning them, we're definitely going to change the relationship between our atmosphere and the sun, thereby producing acid rain and all sorts of things. . . .

FIP: Why have you stopped giving readings?

SOLOMON: That can be summed up in a Chinese proverb: "If you catch a man a fish, you have fed him once. If you teach him how to fish, you have fed him for a lifetime." Doing a reading for someone can give them very concentrated information about themselves, their growth, body, health, and so on. If, instead of doing that, I can teach them to get the information themselves, they have got the "Source" for the rest of their lives. The gift of communication with the "Source" is available to everyone and should be used.

FIP: How has your upbringing influenced your approach to the New Age?

SOLOMON: Growing up a Southern Baptist, very fundamentalist, did some very good things for me. It made me feel very intensely the presence of God, the presence of a source of life, and encouraged my inclination to be concerned about spiritual relationships. I grew up believing literally that it is possible for a man to walk on water and communicate with God. I am thankful for growing up with beliefs in such possibilities.

More recently I have come to believe that if anything works in God's universe, there's a law governing the way it works and that if we apply the cause, we can produce the effect. I am convinced prayer works that way, meditation works that way, healing works that way. Our so-called "spiritual gifts" are based on right relationship with the law that governs the result.

FIP: Your fellowship is now advocating something called ReSource.

SOLOMON: We have created a network called ReSource that is specifically designed to handle administration and business management for spiritual groups, individuals, teachers, workshop leaders. The member organizations own the network. We're trying to form offices in different states, countries, around the world. *— Angelo John Lewis*

Voices of Peace

Citizens Voice Support for Freeze by Voting: Culminating almost a year's activity on the issue of a nuclear freeze, about one-fourth of the American population voted on the largest referendum on a single issue in the nation's history. The resolution asked for a worldwide freeze on the production, testing, and deploymemt of nuclear weapons and the bombers, submarines, and missiles used to carry them. Its supporters are hoping to put pressure on the Reagan Administration and Congress to press harder for an arms accord with the Soviet Union. The resolution passed by a wide margin in eight states and several major cities. It was defeated in only one state and two small counties.

Episcopal Bishops Present Their Views of the Arms Race: The 11-day Episcopal General Convention in New Orleans last fall concluded with the approval of a final version of an eight-page letter written by the bishops on the nuclear arms race. The letter, to be read from the pulpit to clergy and laity, declared continuing buildup of weapons "immoral and unjust."

The Catholic Bishops' Letter: In their pastoral letter on war and peace, Catholic bishops say that stockpiling weapons to deter war is morally justifiable only within a framework of an active pursuit of arms control. The 105-page letter includes a section on the need for people to work actively to build a peaceful world, stressing that "human potential for creative diplomacy and God's action in our midst. . . can open the way to changes that we could barely imagine." The letter is addressed to both Catholics and to policy-makers, and attempts to frame the debate in a broad socio-political context, rather than just the scope of Catholic moral teaching.

People Aren't Joining the Churches the Way They Used To. . .

The American population grew three times faster than church membership in the last decade, a new study by an ecumenical coalition shows. This trend significantly reverses the past pattern, in which church membership outpaced population growth from 1952 to 1971. While many major Protestant denominations lost adherents from 1971 to 1980, some "middling" churches — including Seventh-day Adventists and the Southern Baptist Convention — gained members. Some groups, such as Catholics, remained stable.

. . . But They Are Praying More

In a feature article on prayer published in the *National Catholic Reporter* in

November, Art Winter talks about a new prayer movement he sees taking place. The author of *People Are Praying as Never Before* and his wife Betty are preparing a book of interviews on prayer experiences. The article discusses the resurgence of interest in prayer and spirituality in the Roman Catholic church as well as throughout our society, and includes the thoughts of some of the people he interviewed for the book.

Dr. Ewert Cousins, theology professor at Fordham University, believes that because people have been denied a strong spirituality by the secularization that has dominated Western culture, a vacuum has been created. In response to that vacuum came a renewed interest in theology, but that still did not satisfy seekers' hunger for spirituality. "What they wanted was not information but inspiration," observed Doris Donnelly, professor of spirituality and sacramental theology at Princeton Theological Seminary and contributing editor to *Fellowship in Prayer*. "Therefore, they moved from the theological areas of the mid-60s into the spiritual area."

As interest in prayer and spirituality grew, Roman Catholics, as well as seekers of all faiths and backgrounds, went off on their own quests for spiritual insight and prayer techniques. Teachers and gurus were consulted, new ways of talking about prayer became more familiar, and older practices were being revived.

Art Winter outlined in his article four invisible and unifying movements that he sees going on under the surface activity of praying and searching for prayer. The first is the new blending of the prayer and spirituality of the East and the West for the first time. The second one concerns the way people look at themselves as persons. It's a movement toward unity within the individual — integration of body, mind, and soul. The third concerns a new consciousness that involves seeing in a new way how things relate to each other. This affects the relationships between individuals and the world and is breaking down the barriers between science and religion. The fourth unifying movement is the explicit realization of prayer as social involvement as well as personal life — prayer as an energizer of social commitment.

Winter makes six suggestions for getting the best out of the prayer movement: 1) begin at home; 2) adapt the tradition; 3) blend in the new ways; 4) pray with a community; 5) allow for the flow of the unifying movements; 6) remember that God is the initiator of prayer.

Proposed N.J. Law Seen as Assault on Religious Freedom

In January of last year, Matthew Feldman, Democratic State Senator of New Jersey, introduced a bill that would give families government assistance in removing their adult children from cults. The purpose of the law is to appoint guardians to those exposed to "collective persuasion" if it is believed that the cult member has suffered "psychological deterioration." According to an article in *The New York Times* in November, it would mean that if the cult member refuses to surrender to a psychologically trained guardian for treatment and his place of residence is blocked to law officers, the Superior Court

may issue a warrant for his arrest by the appropriate county sheriff. The article questions Sen. Feldman on the issue of the constitutionally-guaranteed right of free expression of religion. The Senator was quoted as saying: "We're not talking about religion. We're talking about manipulation and control of an individual." The bill is now before the Assembly Judiciary Committee awaiting approval, and may go on to the Governor to be signed into law. The *Times* article points out that the law seeks to define what religion is by legislating what it is not, and that cults are being scapegoated, partly by the churches, who are losing members because they cannot provide for individuals' psychic needs.

World Celebrations on the Calendar

Church Women United held their annual World Community Day celebration Friday, November 5. World Community Day was first celebrated during World War II when a call for prayer for peace was issued, and is now an international event observed in local communities. The organization also sponsors World Day of Prayer the first Friday in March and May Fellowship Day the first Friday in May. This year's theme for World Day of Prayer will be "New Persons in Christ." For more information, contact Church Women United, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 812, New York, New York 10115, (212) 870-2347.

Bible News

National Bible Week was observed November 21 to 27, and President Reagan is expected to proclaim 1983 as the Year of the Bible. Last year saw such milestones in Bible history as a new English translation of the Hebrew scriptures, an updating of the King James Version, and a condensed version by *The Reader's Digest*. Since the first complete Bible was published in English in 1535, there have been 53 different English renditions, according to the American Bible Society. Some are published as scholarly works, others are "readable" or "popularly written" versions.

Children: Tell Us What You Think About Peace

We would like to give children a chance to speak out about peace. Send us your pictures, thoughts, and images about:

- what peace is
- what peace means to you
- how we can create world peace

The opinions expressed in this issue are the authors' and/or subjects' and not necessarily those of the editors or of Fellowship in Prayer.

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Silently and serenely one forgets all words;
Clearly and vividly *That* appears before him.
When one realizes it, it is vast and without edges;
In its Essence, one is clearly aware.
Singularly reflecting is this bright awareness,
Full of wonder is this pure reflection.
Dew and the moon,
Stars and streams,
Snow on pine trees,
And clouds hovering on the mountain peaks —
From darkness, they all become glowingly bright;
From obscurity, they all turn to resplendent light.
Infinite wonder permeates this serenity;
In this Reflection all intentional efforts vanish.
Serenity is the final word (of all teachings);
Reflection is the response to all (manifestations).
Devoid of any effort,
This response is natural and spontaneous.
Disharmony will arise
If in reflection there is no serenity;
All will become wasteful and secondary
If in serenity there is no reflection.
The Truth of serene-reflection
Is perfect and complete.
Oh look! The hundred rivers flow
In tumbling torrents
To the great ocean!

— MASTER HUNG CHIH

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STAND PROUD UPON YOUR BEING

by ALICE MACKENZIE SWAIM

Stand proud upon your being;
ask no pardon
for grace of pose or awkward attitude.
Unique, untampered with,
is beautiful,
much coveted by those constrained and bent.
Stand proud
above the muddled underbrush,
feel the wind blow and count the tangled stars.

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